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**The Community, Crime, and then the Police-
A Time for a Paradigm Shift**

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ABSTRACT

Crime has steadily declined in the United States since the mid-1990s (Zimring, 2007). Although the causations for the decrease are difficult to pinpoint and often differ among criminologists, politicians, government officials, and police leaders seem to have little problem taking credit for the crime declines in their cities, often citing reasons such as the implementation of new and effective police strategies and the hiring of additional police officers. Research, however, shows that the police are not as effective in preventing crime as most tend to believe. In 1994, Bayley, a well-known police scholar, wrote, "The police do not prevent crime. This is one of the best kept secrets of modern life. Experts know it, the police know it, but the public does not know it. Yet, the police pretend that they are society's best defense against crime....This is a myth" (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 227). Since research shows that police have little success in preventing crime, leaders will have to be more realistic with their communities to earn and maintain their trust and enhance working relationships between the two. It is time to place higher priority on what is important in people's lives while sharing more of the responsibility with society in dealing with crime. Citizens want to feel confident that their police department will enforce the laws and exert their authority in a fair and equitable manner. Having candid and open dialogue with the community will increase their support, create a more effective police department, and ultimately impact crime.

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INTRODUCTION

Police leaders' performances are often unfairly evaluated by their city's current crime rate. If crime is decreasing, leaders will be considered successful and their policing strategies effective. If crime is increasing, then the opposite may be true. This standard suggests that police, in general, are solely responsible for impacting crime and, specifically, it suggests that police are solely responsible for preventing it. If this is true, then police chiefs across the United States have done an excellent job in reducing crime continuously for over a decade, since crime has decreased nationally for approximately the last 17 years, according to FBI Crime Reporting Statistics. Below is a graph with numbers released by the FBI for the first six months of 2010 in the U.S. (FBI UCR, 2010). As shown below, overall crime is still on the decline.

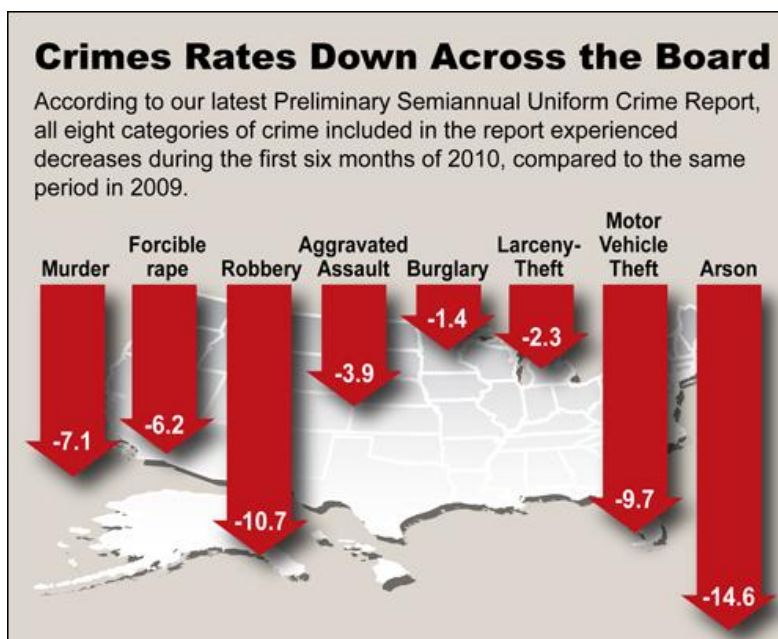


Figure 1. 2010 Crime Rates (First Six Months) (FBI UCR, 2010)

The reality, however, is that police have minimal effect on preventing crime. A major problem that stems precisely from this is that police, in large part, have done a

poor job in educating their communities on what the realities are in terms of the police department's capabilities and effectiveness. Traditionally, the police have frequently requested assistance from the public in dealing with crime, and there is nothing fundamentally wrong with this. However, this promotes the notion that the police are the primary solution in preventing crime and gives credibility to the aforementioned myth that the police actually prevent it. The time is right for a shift to occur from this accepted and common approach to more of a recognition that the police should exist to support the community with their quality of life issues, specifically those associated with crime and disorder.

This approach shifts the primary crime prevention responsibility from the police and places more accountability with the community. Furthermore, when citizens take more ownership of their neighborhoods, positive changes and increased satisfaction occurs, thus strengthening the community-police partnership. This in no way implies that police should take a backseat to crime fighting. It simply means they should not be the sole owners of the results, positive or negative. Instead, police should be working even more closely with the community to further support their efforts to achieve neighborhood goals. Bayley (1998) also wrote, "Responsible policy-making with respect to crime requires examining evidence about the effects of policy, the payoffs and not rhetorical arguments about fighting crime" (p. 1). If in fact Bayley is even close to being correct about police effectiveness, then police leaders and other officials have a duty to be more realistic with their communities and focus more on improving the working relationship to ensure trust and a mutual understanding continuously exist between the two. This will increase citizen cooperation and produce a meaningful effect

on crime. Therefore, crime fighting strategies and common beliefs should be carefully examined since the future of policing is going to rely more heavily on the community with an emphasis on achieving procedural justice.

POSITION

Zimring (2007) researched several possible crime causations and common misconceptions that have been attributed to the crime decline in the 1990s. Incredibly, all of the seven 'serious' crimes including homicide, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, rape, auto theft, and larceny, decreased significantly, with "the aggregate declines ranging from 23% to 44%" (Zimring, 2007, p. 7). Perhaps Zimring's most insightful and convincing argument was his comparison between the United States and Canada, since both countries experienced noteworthy crime declines at approximately the same time period. In view of the fact that both neighboring countries are similar in terms of economies, populations, and crime reporting, he aimed to discover possible causations by finding parallels between the two. It is important to note that not only did crime begin to decline around the same time, but has continued to decline in both countries.

Zimring (2007) found four considerable crime decline characteristics that were shared by both countries. These include the similar sizes of the crime declines, the geographic breadth (particularly in large urban areas), the decrease in a variety of offense types, and the atypical length of the crime decline in both countries. Essentially, Zimring used a process of elimination of the following possible causations to find a commonality or parallel. He compared incarceration rates, the number of police officers, employment, the economy, and demographics.

The United States incarcerated more people during the 1990s than Canada. The rate of imprisonment in the United States increased 57%, while it decreased 6% in Canada (Zimring, 2007, p. 121). While criminal justice policies that resulted in much higher imprisonment trends changed in one country, not much change occurred in the other. Crime, however, still decreased significantly in both countries. Zimring concluded, this is not a “plausible reason for the crime declines jointly experienced by the United States and Canada” (Zimring, 2007, p. 121).

Additionally, the ratio of police officers per capita increased in the U.S. while it remained steady in Canada. In 1994, President Bill Clinton signed the Violent Crime Control Act, which provided law enforcement agencies funding to fight crime and begin community policing programs across the country. This funding ultimately resulted in the hiring of nearly 100,000 new police officers in the United States (Worall, 2008). Levine (1975) compared police strength to crime rates over a period of time. He wrote, “It is tempting for politicians and government leaders to add more police: it is an intuitively sensible and symbolically satisfying solution to the unrelenting problem of criminal violence...the sad fact is, however, that they receive a false sense of security” (as cited in Weisburd and Braga, 2006, p. 9). Perhaps Levine’s point was that simply adding more police does not have the effect that most believe, but, at the very least, it may make people feel safer. Moreover, Levine also wrote that “in most situations they [people] are just as vulnerable with these extra police as without them” (as cited in Weisburd and Braga, 2006, p. 9). Other researchers have studied this and generally agreed that police officers have no effect on crime (Bayley, 1998). However, it is very

important to also point out that, “abolishing police altogether would certainly lead to more crime” (Bayley, 1998, p. 8).

There is no evidence that clearly showed unemployment rates and their economic impact on crime. However, the economic comparison between the United States and Canada revealed an interesting account. Unemployment rates in Canada remained higher in the 1990s than in the previous decade, while U.S. employment dropped in every year after 1992 (Zimring, 2007). In 1998, the U.S. rate was 40% below Canada's 1980 standard (Zimring, 2007). Still, crime decreased in both countries. There is not enough evidence to accept that there is a connection between crime and the economy, especially at the macro level. Other research, such as that conducted by T. Chiricos (1986), found the crime-economy relationship to be weak (as cited in Worall, 2008). Interestingly, some researchers, such as Cook and Zarkin (1985), actually discovered that crime, such as auto theft, increases when unemployment decreases (as cited in Worall, 2008, p. 239).

Out of the five possible causations compared, only demographics between the United States and Canada paralleled each other “that would predict declining crime is in the changing age structure of the population” (Zimring, 2007, p. 123). Zimring wrote that “The total population aged 15-29 dropped from 29% of the Canadian total in 1980 to 24% in 1990 to 20% in 2000” (p. 123). Canada's decline in this high-arrest-risk age group “is equal to that experienced in the United States and not small scale” (p. 123). Additionally, Zimring (2007) wrote that in spite of the decline in this demographic that occurred in both the 1980s and 1990s, “it would be difficult to find many criminologists who would expect that feature alone to produce a crime decline of greater than 10%,”

and even that 10% should have been spread more evenly across two decades in both countries” (p. 129).

If what Zimring (2007) suggested is true, and the reasoning certainly seems logical, then the question remains as to what caused the greatest crime decline in the United States. Zimring referred to something called cyclical variation, or crime cycles. Basically, his contention is that nobody really knows the crime decrease causation(s) for certain. In the world of academia, this is normally unacceptable; however, it is difficult to factually attribute the crime decline without any evidence to prove or disprove the existing theories. The crime decline may be a social phenomenon or just plain luck because there appears to be no other observable reasons. Still, some police leaders have a difficult time in admitting it.

Regardless, police leaders and politicians are often the first to take the bulk of the credit for crime declines and attribute them to these unproven explanations. For example, when explaining how the goal of crime reduction in New Orleans was achieved, Police Superintendent Warren Riley stated, “It is very, very clear that more officers on the streets of New Orleans makes a difference” (Maggi, 2010, para. 5). In Dallas, Texas, the Dallas Morning News quoted Mayor Tom Leppert on the crime decline it experienced: “It just reinforces the strategic action we took in expanding the police force. But then, when you also factor in the context of several years of double or near double-digit reduction, that makes this achievement all the more significant” (Eiserer, 2011, para. 6). This widespread rhetoric only adds to the existing misconception that the police should be the front line defense against crime. While

comparing relationships between similar nations was insightful and thought provoking, other fallacies, specifically policing strategies, must also be examined.

For example, for decades, patrol officers in squad cars have been the prevailing policing strategy for preventing crime. In 1972, an experiment was conducted in Kansas City, Missouri by the Police Foundation to determine whether preventive patrol in patrol cars was effective. Then Kansas City Police Chief Clarence Kelley, supported this social experiment in his city, stating, "Many of us in the department had the feeling we were training, equipping, and deploying men to do a job neither we, nor anyone else, knew much about" (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 6). In short, researchers divided 15 patrol beats into three groups: reactive, control, and proactive. Reactive beat officers were "instructed to respond to calls for service only" (p. 7). Control beat officers maintained business as usual, which was "maintaining the normal level of officers at one per beat" (p. 7). Proactive beats were "intensified by two to three times its usual level through the assignment of additional patrol cars" (p. 7). The findings by Kelling, Pate, Dieckman, and Brown (1974) clearly showed that "by increasing or decreasing the intensity of routine preventative patrol in police cars did not affect crime, service delivery to citizens, or citizens' feelings of security" (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 7). These results were surprising to police officers, who, prior to the experiment, believed crime would positively increase without officers patrolling the streets.

In 1984, a different study was conducted by Spelman and Brown that focused on whether rapid response to calls for service improved crime fighting strategies (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006). Police have placed priority on improving call response times: "the faster the response, they have reasons, the better the chances of catching a

criminal at or near the scene of the crime” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 8). Spelman and Brown’s (1984) findings actually showed that “rapid police response may be unnecessary for three out of four serious crimes reported to police” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 8). This evidence should further encourage police leaders to continue to educate the community the importance of having a sense of urgency when reporting any suspicious or criminal activity.

Another traditional crime fighting model is the emphasis of improving the quality of criminal investigations. The desired result is to impact crime by incarcerating offenders and deterring others that may be pursuing criminal activity. The underlying principle is that criminals are unable to commit crimes if they are incarcerated. However, “a series of studies in the 1970s and 1980s suggested that investigations had little impact on crime” (Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 9). The primary goal for police investigations should not be to impact crime, since research shows otherwise, but rather to seek justice for crime victims. The police cannot arrest their way out of crime; it simply does not work.

Former New York Commissioner William Bratton was given much credit for dramatically reducing crime throughout most of the 1990s in what historically has been called the most crime-ridden city in the United States. Compstat, short for computer statistics, emerged as one of the most innovative police strategies/approaches for reducing crime in the United States. According to Weisburd, Mastrofski, McNally, Greenspan, and Willis (2003), Compstat was based on the following six key components: “mission clarification, internal accountability, geographic organization of operational command, organizational flexibility, data driven problem identification and

assessment and innovative problem solving, and external information exchange” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 269).

Compstat was described by Kelling and Sousa (2001) as “perhaps the single most important organizational/administrative innovation in policing during the latter half of the 20th century” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 267). Compstat’s critics argue that this crime fighting strategy was anything but innovative; it appeared “to be more focused on maintaining and reinforcing the bureaucratic or paramilitary model of police organization” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 284). It is interesting that Bratton (2007) himself wrote in an article, “I can remember during my time in New York City that once we had a plan, we did everything everywhere all at once because with 38,000 cops-for the first time in my career, I could do that” (p. 29). This statement points out two things. First, there is nothing new or innovative about doing everything everywhere. And second, Bratton admitted that having 38,000 cops certainly is an advantage that is unique for police departments.

In 1996, Poole wrote, “Compstat has become the Lourdes of policing, drawing pilgrim cops from around the world...for a taste of New York’s magic” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 269). The reality is that this “magic” was also taking place across the country, whether or not Compstat was being utilized. While Compstat and other similar police strategies are useful tools in reducing crime, they are certainly not the panacea for preventing crime. Nonetheless, Compstat received plenty of attention and recognition after New York experienced significant crime reductions in the 1990s.

Hot spots policing is another well-known traditional policing strategy. This method is basically placing “cops on the dots,” referring to locations where crimes have

been committed in hopes of deterring or preventing future crimes. The police are very good at telling the public where crime occurred, but not very effective at predicting it. If they could, then crime could be prevented. Although hot spots policing has shown to be effective at reducing crime in a particular location, the results are minimal and can be misleading. For instance, an experimental study led by Sherman and Weisburd (1995) involving police patrols in high crime areas was conducted in the Minneapolis Police Department (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006). One study by Koper (1995) found that “the best research in Minneapolis suggests a positive relationship between the length of patrol presence at a hot spot and the length of the deterrent effect, up to 15 minutes, after which time, the effect reverses” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 246). While there is some impact, 15 minutes of deterrence is certainly not significant enough to make a real difference in preventing crime.

Furthermore, critics of hot spots policing and similar police strategies argue that there are other disadvantages such as displacement effects. Displacement is known as pushing the crime problem into neighboring areas because of some intensive, focused effort to control a problem (Worall, 2008). If this occurs, the problem may be that “non targeted residents or locations are suffering more because additional crime activity is being pushed into their environment” (Worall, 2008, p. 17). Pushing crime into other areas does not impact overall crime. Additionally, according to Dennis Rosenbaum, other adverse effects of hot spots policing include displacement effects, decreased police-community relations, abusive policing, stigma from labeling, and policing bias by race and class, unanticipated effects on crime, and collective efficacy (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006). These unanticipated results will not help the police achieve

desired goals. Rosenbaum further stated that if hot spots policing becomes zero tolerance or broken windows policing, then this “can drive a wedge between the police and community, as the latter can feel like targets rather than partners” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 253). The paradigm shift places the community at the forefront. Police should stop acting alone and begin to support the community’s efforts by focusing on listening, building trust, and achieving procedural justice.

Striving for procedural justice in all encounters with the community is good business for police organizations. Tyler (2006) explained that a normative perspective on procedural justice views people as being concerned with aspects of their experience not linked only to outcomes. People want to feel that they were treated fairly, period. These normative aspects of experience include neutrality, lack of bias, honesty, efforts to be fair, politeness, and respect for citizens’ rights (Tyler, 2006). The police should already be practicing this during every encounter with citizens. As Bayley (1998) so eloquently wrote, “Primary responsibility rests with families, the community, and its individual members. The police can only facilitate and assist members of the community in the maintenance of order, and no more” (p. 124). If police can grasp this and truly improve peoples’ attitudes about legal authorities and develop a mutual respect, both groups will reap the benefits. This is when meaningful policing can take place. This is the time for the police to be “real” with the public.

A case in point was an incident that occurred in Cambridge, Massachusetts that gained national attention involving a veteran Cambridge Police Department sergeant of police and a well-known Harvard professor. The reason this captured plenty of attention, particularly from police agencies, is that it is reflective of many encounters that

occur between police officers and citizens every day. Even President Obama weighed in and held a “summit” with both parties to try and gain a mutual understanding of what had transpired.

The following are both accounts of what occurred during their encounter, with each giving their perspective, which was derived from the Cambridge Review Committee’s (CRC) final report. The incident according to Sergeant Crowley: According to the final report and the incident report, Sergeant James Crowley responded to a 911 call regarding a possible burglary in progress. When he arrived, Sgt. Crowley found an older black male inside the foyer of the residence. Crowley, who was still the only officer at the scene, motioned with his hand, asking the “suspect” to step out onto the porch. According to Crowley, the man, who later identified himself as Henry Gates, refused, saying, “No, I will not.” This may have been the turning point that caused this typical call to become a national topic of discussion where opinions about this incident were plentiful. Gates then asked, rather demanded, to know who Crowley was. Crowley stated he identified himself as a sergeant of the Cambridge Police Department and was there to investigate a burglary in progress. Gates allegedly opened the door and stated, “Why, because I am a black man in America?” Crowley then asked Gates if there was anyone else in the home, to which Gates responded that it was none of his business and accused the officer of being a racist police officer. Crowley assured Gates he was responding to a 911 call at his residence (Cambridge Review Committee [CRC], 2010).

Gates telephoned an unknown person and asked the person to “get the chief.” Gates went on to say that Crowley had no idea who he was messing with. Crowley

wrote in his report that he was quite surprised and confused with the behavior he exhibited toward him. After being asked for his identification and initially refusing to comply, Gates showed Crowley a Harvard identification card. Crowley called the Harvard University Police Department to verify and then began to leave premises. Gates proceeded to demand to know Crowley's name and accused him of being a racist police officer, again stating he, "wasn't someone to mess with." Crowley told Gates he had already provided his name twice upon request (CRC, 2010).

As Crowley was leaving, Gates continued to yell at Sergeant Crowley and behave in a tumultuous manner. Crowley warned Gates he was being disorderly and was causing bystanders to appear "surprised and alarmed." After a second warning, Crowley placed Gates under arrest. According to Crowley's incident report, Gates was arrested for disorderly conduct because he exhibited "loud and tumultuous" behavior in a public place that was directed at a uniformed police officer who was present investigating a report of a crime in progress. Interestingly enough, the District Attorney later dropped the charge against Gates, stating that dropping the charge was "a just resolution to an unfortunate set of circumstances" (CRC, 2010).

The incident according to Professor Henry Gates: Gates had just arrived at his home from the airport and attempted to enter his home through the front door but was unable to because the door was damaged. Gates entered through the rear of his residence and opened the front door. Gates' driver assisted him with his luggage. Interestingly, as this was taking place, the driver told Gates that he noticed an elderly female looking at them and stated the woman "was calling the police on us." While on the phone with his real estate office, Gates noticed a uniformed officer on his front

porch. When Gates opened the door, he was asked by the officer to step outside. According to Gates, the officer's tone "made the hairs on the back of his neck stand up," and he refused to comply with the officer's demand (CRC, 2010).

Gates told Sgt. Crowley he lived there and showed the officer a Harvard identification card and Massachusetts's driver's license. Gates noticed the officer did not respond, so he asked the officer for his name and badge number. Still without a response, Gates said, "the silence was deafening." Gates went on to tell the officer, "You're not responding because I am a black man and you're a white officer." Crowley finally said, "We are done here," and turned to leave the house. Gates followed him, again asking for the Crowley's name and badge number, at one point pointing his finger at the officer's chest. The officer responded, "Thank you for accommodating my earlier request; now you're under arrest." Gates was transported to the police station. Gates told the review committee that the only thing he would have done differently was stepping outside his home after the encounter inside. Gates could not understand how he would be considered a burglar-- a slight, elderly man who walks with a cane and who comes to the front door, telephone in hand, to talk to the police. He wondered, "What criminal would do that?" (Cambridge Review Committee, 2010).

After reading the details from each account on what occurred that night, it is evident that there are two very different perspectives. And not surprisingly, both parties believe they were correct in how they handled the situation. In their interviews to the Cambridge Review Committee, each recalled "a level of confusion at each other's behavior" (Cambridge Review Committee, 2010, p. 21). They could not understand how the other person could not comprehend their perspective. The officer's primary

concern was that of safety and possibly catching a burglar; the professor's apprehension was that he was being seen as a suspect rather than a law-abiding citizen. Gates interpreted Crowley's actions, particularly his refusal to formally give his name and badge number, as an insult and an abuse of power (Cambridge Review Committee, 2010, p. 21). Crowley stated he did in fact attempt to provide that information to Gates, but he was unable to do so because Gates was yelling so loudly. Crowley interpreted Gates' repeated questions as an attempt to be belligerent. Clearly, both parties failed to recognize each other's position.

This incident was avoidable (Cambridge Review Committee, 2010, p. 21). The CRC found that both Sgt. Crowley and Professor Gates missed opportunities to deescalate the situation. The committee focused on misunderstandings, failed communications, and fear between the two men. While Sgt. Crowley was right about being cautious of a potentially dangerous encounter, once the threat was diminished, he should have taken steps to deescalate the situation. On the other hand, Professor Gates should have complied with Sgt. Crowley's demands and should have tried to understand the situation from a police officer's point of view. A measure of respect may have helped deescalate the circumstances. Sgt. Crowley felt he "had no choice" but to arrest the professor. However, the CRC believed there could have been a better outcome. Perhaps Sgt. Crowley should have taken "greater pains" to explain the uncertainty and potential dangers of the call; additionally, his duty to assess the risks may have caused him to "adopt a seemingly abrupt tone" (Cambridge Review Committee, 2010, p. 3).

The CRC made it clear that the arrest of Professor Gates is not being questioned and noted that it was not unjustified. The point they did raise, however, is whether some police actions that may be “within policy” are not necessarily the best outcomes to a situation and may undermine the relationship between the police and the communities they serve (CRC, 2010, p. 4). The CRC Report (2010) also stated that if “both men had shared responsibility for understanding each other and communicating openly, the outcome could have been better” (p. 4). Mutual respect will be the cornerstone of the future of policing. The CRC (2010) believes “today’s departments cannot serve independently of the communities they serve; today’s policing strategies and operations are deeply enmeshed in the community” (p. 4).

As one can imagine, opinions are abundant on both sides of this encounter. Some find this to be an act of racial profiling and others believe it was just part of police work. The fact is, however, there is no denying the reality that there are sharp differences between police agencies and their communities. In keeping with both Gates and Crowley’s perspectives, at the minimum, there was confusion, misunderstandings, different interpretations, and miscommunication. Police and citizens will have to work at improving these matters to gain a mutual respect, appreciation, and trust that will result in increased police support through improved community relations.

COUNTER POSITION

To be fair, there is research that shows slightly different accounts of common beliefs such as the effect of hiring additional officers and the economy. For example, according to Worall (2008), there are studies that give credit to the 1994 Violent Control Act, which funded the hiring of almost 100,000 officers across the country, for reducing

crime in America. Zhao, Scheider, and Thurman (2002) suggested that, “C.O.P.S hiring and innovative grant programs have resulted in significant reductions in local crime rates in cities with populations greater than 100,000 for both violent and nonviolent offenses” (as cited in Worall, 2008, p. 49). Also, the research on the employment-crime connection varies as well. In contrast to what Zimring (2007) argued, Worall (2008) found that when national burglary and robbery rates are high, the unemployment rate is high.

Response times can be important; however, this idea may be misguided. What Spelman and Brown (1984) found was that citizen reporting time was more crucial than officers’ response times in apprehending criminals at the scene of a crime (as cited in Weisburd and Braga, 2006). Former New York Police Commissioner Bratton (2007) wrote, “The effects of rapidly responding to crimes were muted because research showed that it took people almost 10 minutes to decide to call the police in the first place” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 11). This further supported that the real key to combating crime largely depends on citizen cooperation.

As far as policing strategies are concerned, Compstat and hot spots policing have received plenty of attention. Immediately after Compstat was introduced in 1994, the following three years corresponded with dramatic declines in the city’s crime rate. And, “According to the FBI’s Unified Crime Reports, the city’s 12% decline in 1994 grew to 16 percent in 1995 and yielded another 16 percent in 1996” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 268). The crime drop in New York was almost exactly twice that elsewhere in the United States (Zimring, 2007). This certainly appears that the reason for the drop in crime, at least on the surface, was due to this ‘new’ policing approach.

Also, the use of hot spots policing has shown small successes at a specific time and location. Sherman and Weisburd (1995) concluded that their results from the Minneapolis Experiment showed “clear, if modest, general deterrent effects of substantial increases in police presence in crime hot spots” (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 231)

Although there are several findings that showed some truths in common assumptions and successes in preventing crime, the results are minimal at best. For example, Zimring (2007) discounted the connection between increased police employment and crime. The fact is that criminologists do not agree on a definitive causation(s) on what exactly caused the greatest reduction in the United States since the post-World War II era, so police leaders are either disregarding this truth or just do not know otherwise.

It is also reasonable to understand why Compstat has received as much attention from the public as it has. After all, the crime statistics were significant immediately after its implementation. However, a point to consider is that crime decreased across the country, whether police departments utilized the Compstat model or not. Hot spots policing can also be an effective strategy for a specific crime problem. As stated earlier, the drawback is that once the police leave, crime returns. In essence, crime decreases only when the police are present. And the police cannot be everywhere, all of the time in order to prevent crime. This does not even include the fact that certain crimes are non-suppressible, such as drug use or domestic abuse, which usually occurs inside a private residence. It is simply unrealistic to believe the police can prevent crime.

CONCLUSION

Since there is little evidence that supports the idea that police should be primarily responsible for preventing crime, police leaders should be striving to achieve what is important to the people they serve if they are to be considered successful. If the future of policing is to be community based, then certainly the effects of hot spots or any other crime fighting strategy should be carefully examined. The trend appears to be moving toward achieving procedural justice. The Cambridge incident was a good example of the lack of trust, understanding, and respect that exists between the community and the police. In order for police organizations to be successful, the public's trust and confidence must be uncompromised and continually strengthened. Instead of focusing solely on preventing crime, measures should be taken to bridge the gap between the community and the police. In effect, a balance between the two should be preserved. The community's attitude about the police relies heavily on their feeling about how they are treated by police during the exercise of authority: "That is, positive attitudes about the police drop when citizens feel that they have been treated unfairly, disrespected, not listened to, or physically abused during encounters with the police" (Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 253). Having improved communication with the community will provide officers with additional intelligence that can only help with impacting crime. Police officers cannot fight crime independently and still be as effective. This responsibility should be shared with the community.

As clearly shown, positive police-community relations are a must to achieve procedural justice, since trust between the two must be present at all times. Police must always look at the bigger picture to understand what is more important to citizens

than only concentrating in policing strategies for reducing crime. This can certainly undermine the public's trust in the police. The consequences are enormous, ranging from lawsuits to a declining willingness to obey the law (Weisburd & Braga, 2006). Police organizations must stop having an 'us against them' attitude and a 'we know what's best for them' approach. Police need a clear grasp of what the community needs and expects from them. Rosenbaum pointed out that "residents will insist on aggressive policing and enforcement up to the point where it directly affects them, their family, or their friends, who frequently end up in jail or report being mistreated by police (as cited in Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 254). Communities, including high crime areas (hot spots), should be able "to experience both safety and liberty and not be required to choose one or the other" (Weisburd & Braga, 2006, p. 255). If the police continue to disregard what the community feels about their department, then meaningful impact will be difficult to achieve. It is time for police leaders to tone down the unproven rhetoric that can be perceived as misleading the public. Citizens deserve to know that their police department is there to support them with their quality of life issues related to crime, and trust that procedural justice will be achieved when doing so. In the end, both the police and community will benefit.

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